

Preparedness is key when dealing with any weather hazard!

Resolve to be Ready in 2009 - With the New Year comes the inevitable urge to make ambitious resolutions for 2009. High on people's lists should be a determination to become better prepared for emergencies. Jefferson County Citizen Corps Council, along with other Citizens Corps Councils throughout the State, urges all Alabama Citizens to prepare for all emergencies whether manmade or natural.

Looking back at 2008, we see the importance of preparedness as we recall the return of an extremely active hurricane season, especially along the Gulf Coast.

All too often, people take the assistance of first responders for granted. They assume that first responders will routinely ride to the rescue, arriving in time to meet human needs. Unfortunately such a benign outcome cannot be guaranteed. For one thing, disasters are unpredictable. Responders cannot always reach the beleaguered in time. A host of obstacles can delay their arrival.

Thus, preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Individuals and families must take preparedness measures of their own ahead of time, measures that can enable them to respond safely and faster when an emergency occurs.

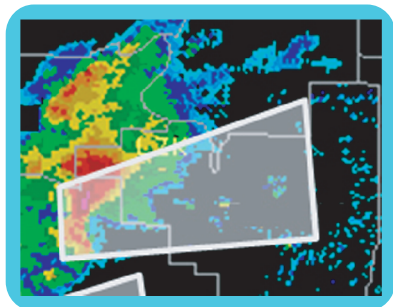
The Emergency Management Agencies and County Citizen Corps Councils across the state encourage you to visit www.ready.gov or call your local Emergency Management office to learn how to prepare your families, homes, and businesses for all types of emergencies.



National Weather Service Watches and Warnings

Although radar, satellite, and computer systems continue to improve, if you do not know what to do or where to go during severe weather, watches and warnings are not effective! Remember, severe weather can develop rapidly and advance warning time may only be a few minutes. When severe weather is imminent, you should execute your safety plan calmly and quickly.

A **Watch** means that **conditions are favorable** for severe thunderstorm, tornado, or flash flood development. **This is the time to be weather-aware.** You should keep alert by listening to your weather radio, a television or radio station, or check the NWS webpage for the latest weather information. Know where your children are. Recall your safety plan. Be aware of where to go and what to do if a severe thunderstorm, tornado, or flash flood threatens. A watch typically covers a large area and has a four to six hour duration. An example of a severe thunderstorm watch is pictured to the right.



A **Warning** means a severe thunderstorm, tornado, or flash flood **has been sighted or indicated by radar.** People in the path of the storm should take **immediate life-saving actions.** Put your safety plan into action. Go to your predetermined shelter area. Warnings are valid for 30 minutes to an hour and can cover portions of one or more counties. To the left is an example of a storm-based tornado warning.